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ABSTRACT

The experiences of 10 states described in this paper illustrate how higher education can be a constructive force for change in the schools, and how the changes taking place in school-based curriculum and assessment provide valuable lessons for collegiate reform. The 10 states profiled are California, Colorado, Florida Illinois, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. The paper reviews current admission policies and practices in these states. Section 1 explains the need to clearly communicate to high school students expectations for college-level work to foster greater collegiate retention and graduation. Section 2 examines the need to strengthen the quality of the high school curriculum. Section 3 outlines the need to reduce remediation in postsecondary education. Section 4 explores the need to improve the levels of access and academic achievement of underrepresented students. Section 5 discusses the need to manage enrollment within constrained budgets and section 6 addresses the need to align high school student outcomes and college expectations. Appendixes contain more state-by-state detail and information on state officers who provided additional detail on their state's programs. Contains 25 references. (JB)

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COLLEGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

A NEW ROLE FOR STATES

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COLLEGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: A NEW ROLE FOR STATES

Esther M. Rodriguez

September 1995

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The Education Commission of the States is a nonprofit, nationwide interstate compact formed in 1965. The primary purpose of the commission is to help governors, state legislators, state education officials and others develop policies to improve the quality of education at all levels. Forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are members.

The State Higher Education Executive Officers is a nonprofit, nationwide association of the chief executive officers serving statewide coordinating boards and governing boards of postsecondary education. Forty-nine states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are members.

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Foreword

A role for states in college admissions? Our colleagues on campuses across the nation might wonder: Why any role at all?

While the decisions made about individual admissions properly rest with campuses, there remains a critically important role for states. Over the past decade, state education leaders at both the K-12 and higher education levels have forged new partnerships that more closely align these two systems. In a variety of ways we see these two sectors working to improve quality, raise expectations, and meet public demands for accountability.

The experiences of the 10 states which are the focus of this report illustrate how higher education can be a constructive force for change in the schools and how, in turn, the changes taking place in school-based curriculum and assessment provide valuable lessons for collegiate reform as well. I suspect you will find much in this report that you can directly apply to your state context.

This paper, authored by Esther Rodriguez, is a part of a long-standing set of collaborations between SHEEO, the Education Commission of the States, the regional compacts — including the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education and the Southern Regional Education Board — the College Board, American College Testing, and the Educational Testing Service. We thank each of them for their contributions to these joint efforts.

We would also like to acknowledge the guidance and leadership to this effort of the 1994-95 SHEEO Committee on School-College Collaboration. Members of this committee are Stephen Jordan, Kansas Board of Regents, Jeffrey Baker, Montana Systems of Higher Education, Frank Besnette, Arizona Board of Regents, Gary Cox, Kentucky Council on Higher Education, Joseph Cox, Oregon State System of Higher Education, Diane Gilleland, Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Stanley Koplik, Massachussetts Higher Education Coordinating Council, Charles Manning, University of West Virginia System, Stephen Portch, Georgia Board of Regents, Fred Sheheen, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and Katherine Lyall, University of Wisconsin System.

We welcome your comments on this work as well as suggestions for future projects

James R. Mingle
Executive Director
SHEEO

COLLEGE ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: A NEW ROLE FOR STATES

Introduction

Historically, colleges and universities have set the requirements for admission into public postsecondary degree programs, with states playing minor roles in influencing these decisions. This began to change in the early 1980s, when public concern increased about the educational achievement levels of K-12 students. Many states responded by increasing academic course requirements for college admission and by initiating school reforms that included pedagogical change (i.e., moving away from didactic to applied approaches) and substantive change (i.e., setting guidelines for what students should know and be able to do). While these two state actions appeared independent, both were intended to meet the common goal of improving student performance.

Four central questions now need to be asked concerning how well state college admission policies have been coordinated with school efforts to increase student achievement and prepare students for postsecondary degree programs. These questions are: Have state policies supported higher student achievement? Are they well coordinated so that students can successfully make the transition from secondary into postsecondary education programs? Does the high school curriculum prepare students for coursework in their freshman year? Are secondary school students given sufficient information about the skills and competencies that they will need to meet the rigor and demands of college-level work?

Most K-12 educators agree that state and institution policies on student eligibility for college admission are critical to education quality and systemic change in education. Those developing state and local restructuring or reform initiatives view admission policies and procedures as the key components to successful implementation of a unified K-16 system.[1]

Many of these reformers also believe that traditional admission requirements are flawed and would like them to change. For example, they argue that the current system tends to focus on seat-time – the number of hours each week over a given semester or school year – rather than on what students should learn and whether they have done so. Many reformers also suggest that instead of traditional requirements – the title and number of required courses, grade point average, class rank and/or a minimum score on a college entrance examination – college admission requirements should describe or define the competencies and skills needed by first-time entering students. Additionally, these students should be able to demonstrate their skills and competencies on a variety of "performance-based" or "authentic" assessment instruments.

Higher education systems staff have developed and implemented college admission policies to ensure student success and timely graduation. These offices cite evidence that students who have taken an academic core curriculum in high school are more likely to go on to college than students who have taken fewer academic courses.[2] They also point out that students who do not take the minimum high school college preparatory core requirements for admission (e.g., English, mathematics, laboratory science, social studies and foreign

languages) are generally deficient in basic skills, including reading comprehension, writing, mathematics and critical thinking. Too many students enter college needing remediation in these skill areas, they say, and these deficiencies affect their college success.

They also cite the side benefits of the college admission requirements. For example, because of the differences in rigor, cost, size and number of the programs offered in colleges and universities in each state, admission requirements serve as tools to help college administrators sort and place students in undergraduate degree programs that best meet students' interests and skills. Standard admission criteria across states also facilitate the comparison of students with similar achievement levels and interests.

States, in addition, are concerned with increasing and sustaining racial and ethnic diversity in postsecondary education programs. Many underrepresented students, especially minorities from poor urban and rural areas, attend schools with scarce resources, meaning they may not have access to the courses required for college admission. These students may not have exposure to laboratory sciences, computer science or foreign languages or to teachers who have access to quality professional development to enrich their own skills and strengthen student's skills in mathematics, reading and writing. Developing minimum college admission requirements also means developing early outreach and academic support strategies to ensure that underrepresented students are not disadvantaged or prevented from further education because of the quality of the educational experience in their schools.

This paper outlines how states are using admissions requirements to strengthen student preparation for college. In particular, the paper focuses on examples from 10 states: California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin. It reviews current admission policies and practices in these states and provides more state-by-state detail in Appendices A and B. It explains the rationale and process for developing minimum admission criteria in the states and discusses whether and to what extent admission requirements are supporting student achievement in college.

What this paper cannot provide, however, are definitive answers about whether state admission strategies have succeeded in preparing young high school graduates for collegiate success. Most state work has yet to be evaluated, and almost no data exist to directly correlate a state's college admission policy with freshman year performance.

Some of the profiled states are using, and will continue to use, traditional admission criteria as a basis for admitting students into public colleges and universities. A few of these have documented evidence that first-year students who complete a college preparatory curricula in high school tend to perform more successfully in their freshman year than students who do not take the core.

In other states, school reform legislation seems to be driving changes in college admission requirements. For example, legislation in Oregon and Florida calls for overhauling the college admission process to accommodate statewide school restructuring. In states where school reform is being initiated at the local level, feeder schools are working with colleges and universities to develop alternative admission processes to accommodate the rate and character of these changes. K-12 schools and colleges are working together in these states to

pilot and evaluate their efforts for broader implementation in later years.

In addition to an overview of current statewide college admission criteria, this paper is divided into six sections. While there is an attempt in each section to focus on a particular policy concern identified by the states, these concerns cannot be described in total isolation. Some of the issues in the sections overlap and are interconnected. For example, postsecondary remediation cannot be discussed without also addressing the need to strengthen high school curricula, increase communication of necessary academic skills and expectations and improve the partnership between high schools and postsecondary education. Taken together, the sections comprise the state rationale for developing college admission requirements.

Section I explains the need to clearly articulate to high school students expectations for college-level work to foster greater collegiate retention and graduation. Section II examines the need to strengthen the quality of the high school curriculum. Section III outlines the need to reduce remediation in postsecondary education. Section IV explores the need to improve the levels of access and academic achievement of underrepresented students. Section V discusses the need to manage enrollments within constrained budgets. And section VI adresses the need to align high school student outcomes and college expectations.

Information for the paper was drawn from the Statewide College Admission Policy Study, conducted jointly by the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO), the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (WICHE) during the summer of 1994. Included in the study were statewide admission policies and practices in 10 states (California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas and Wisconsin). Additionally, staff of the three organizations undertook a literature review of state-level policies and reports and conducted telephone interviews with staff in state higher education agencies (Appendix C). When necessary, supporting national and regional data were used to supplement the state-level data.

Statewide Admission Criteria: An Overview

Less than half the states in this country have statewide minimum requirements for college entry. In most states, the systems or individual colleges and universities set their own admission standards.[3] Whether at the state, system or institution levels, admission requirements generally follow a common "traditional" pattern: (a) graduation from high school; (b) completion of a college preparatory curriculum made up of a prescribed number of English, mathematics, science, social studies and sometimes foreign language courses; (c) submission of ACT or SAT examination scores; and (d) maintenance of a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) and/or class rank. Usually these criteria apply only to first-year freshmen in four-year colleges and universities. Community colleges in almost all states have open enrollment, meaning that students are accepted if they have a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Occasionally, some degree and transfer programs at the community colleges have prescribed requirements for admission.

Of the 10 states that participated in the Statewide Admission Policy Study, six (Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Oregon and Wisconsin) have set minimum statewide requirements for admission of first-year freshmen in public four-year baccalaureate degree programs. In each of these states, institutions may set additional requirements for admission above the minimum mandated criteria applicable to their defined roles and missions. Two additional states – California and Colorado – base student eligibility for baccalaureate degree programs at their public college systems on differentiated criteria. Under the California Master Plan for Higher Education, the public university systems may select first-year freshmen from two levels of public high school graduates: the University of California System selects from the top 12% and the California State University System from the top 33% of the high school graduating class. Students who meet the eligibility criteria to apply to institutions within one or both systems must also comply with individual institutional or program admission requirements.

Similarly, the policy of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education provides for differentiated admission standards consistent with institutional roles and missions. The 12 public four-year institutions are distributed among four tiers: highly selective, selective moderately selective and modified open. The Commissions Admission Index determines student eligibility for each tier, and each institution establishes admission requirements within this framework.[4] Finally, two states – New York and Texas – have no statewide admission criteria. The systems or institutions in these states establish their own admission standards.

Section I

The Need to Clearly Articulate to High School Students Expectations for College-Level Work

Current admission requirements in eight of the 10 profiled states were established or have been revised within the past decade. (This surge in policy development is often tied to the release of the noted 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*.[5]) In these states, legislative committees, statewide commissions or other state-level bodies called on colleges and universities to help improve the preparation of high school students for college-level work, charging them to require more rigorous high school coursework for college admission. For example, in 1986, the Illinois Board of Higher Education set requirements for high school courses for first-time freshman admission to baccalaureate programs in public universities and baccalaureate transfer programs in public community colleges. The policy became statute in 1989. Ann Bragg, associate director for academic affairs, reports that improving student achievement levels set the context for the states involvement.

> Prior to the policy being adopted, board staff conducted a series of studies related to student preparation for college. Some of these studies were influenced by legislative questions about the amount of remediation in higher education. The state studies included information on higher education remediation, the quality of undergraduate education, the preparation of students entering postsecondary programs, what colleges and universities were telling high schools about what students should know and be

> able to do, and institutional admission requirements. The studies revealed that there were no common requirements among institutions, and as a result, there were no clear guidelines being given to students about what they should expect and the level of preparation they needed to successfully do college-level work.

The Illinois policy requires that no new student be admitted to a public college or university baccalaureate degree program unless he/she has satisfactorily completed at least 15 units of high school coursework in the following categories: four years of English (emphasizing written and oral communications and literature), three years of social studies (emphasizing history and government), three years of mathematics (introductory through advanced algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or fundamentals of computer programming), three years of science (laboratory sciences) and two years of electives in foreign language, music, vocational education or art.

Similarly, in 1981, the Prichard Committee on Higher Education in Kentucky's Future, a statewide organization that monitors education issues in the state, released a report called *In Pursuit of Excellence*, calling for strengthening the quality of postsecondary education programs. The report made several recommendations to the Kentucky Council on Higher Education regarding higher education's role in helping to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education. Regarding higher education and the schools, the report states:

> Higher education intentionally (and sometimes unintentionally) influences elementary and secondary education in many ways, through its admission policies, services provided to students, preparation of teachers, direct social and political influence, and neglect of those educational levels. Therefore, higher education must make its expectations clear to educational institutions that prepare students for higher education and must also take the initiative for improving communication and coordination between and among all levels of the educational system and for providing leadership in the continuing pursuit of high quality education in Kentucky.[6]

In response to the Commission's recommendations, the Council appointed a committee to take a long-term look at undergraduate education and student preparation for college. The committee found that high school students were not taking the kinds of academic courses that would help them to succeed in college. It recommended requiring a Pre-College Curriculum (PCC) for admission to baccalaureate programs while maintaining open admission for community colleges and community college-type programs at universities. The current PCC consists of four years of high school English (including English I, II, III, IV or AP English), three years of mathematics (including algebra I or algebra II, geometry or the integrated mathematics series), two years of science (including biology I and either chemistry or physics I, with at least one laboratory course), two years of social studies (including world civilization and U.S. history or AP American history). Also, college-bound students are encouraged to take additional coursework in mathematics, science, foreign languages, arts and computer literacy.

One reason for prescribing college-admission requirements is to motivate students to take more demanding courses in high school. Has the strategy worked? According to data by the National Center on Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, since the early 1980s,

high school students have taken increasing units of academic and advanced courses. In 1992, four out of 10 American high school graduates completed four years of English, three years of social studies and three years each of mathematics and science, an increase of 27% since 1982. This increase applied to students of all racial/ethnic groups, males and females, students in academic and vocational programs and students attending both public and non-public schools. Graduates took slightly more than three Carnegie units of mathematics in 1990, an increase of about one-half unit from 1982. A little more than one-third of 1990 high school graduates completed a sequence of at least 2.5 Carnegie units that included algebra I, algebra II and geometry. This represents an increase over 1982, when only one-fifth of high school students took these courses. However, only 2% of high school graduates in 1990 added trigonometry and calculus to this pre-college mathematics course sequence.

In science, student course taking showed dramatic increases. Students completed about three years of science in 1990, an increase of almost one year from 1982. Ninety-two percent of 1990 high school graduates took biology, up from 75% in 1982. Forty-eight percent of high school graduates in 1990 took both biology and chemistry, while only 28% of students took this sequence in 1982.[7] According to the U.S. Department of Education, the primary reason cited by high school seniors for taking mathematics and science courses in high school was to meet college requirements.[8]

States, too, have found that since implementing policies requiring increased high school course requirements, overall greater percentages of first-year freshmen have taken a college preparatory curriculum. Most of the states, however, have not specifically evaluated the effects of these admission policies on the students. For example, many states cannot answer the following questions:

- Were students who met the state's minimum admission requirements admitted into a public college or university in the state?
- Did they need remediation their freshman year?
- What were their freshman GPAs?
- Did they persist in their undergraduate program?
- Did they graduate?
- How did students who met the general admission requirements compare with those first-year entering students who were admitted through alternative means?

Without direct correlation between the curriculum requirements and the college performance of students who met them, the effectiveness of these policies is difficult to assess. For example, according to a 1992 evaluation of the Statewide Admission Standards Policy conducted by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, although the percentage of students meeting institutional admission standards increased statewide, the average academic ability (as measured by ACT and SAT scores) of enrolling students remained about the same.

Similar results were documented in California's 1992 eligibility study. That study showed that the percentage of public high school graduates who completed the college preparatory curriculum had increased rapidly since 1984, when the first eligibility study was conducted. Higher course completion rates seemed to parallel increased participation in advanced placement examinations. But average total SAT scores for California seniors have remained fairly constant since 1985, possibly because of changes in the size and composition of the sample of test takers (some may not have taken a college preparatory curriculum) or possibly because students may not have gained the skills and competencies generally associated with the college preparatory courses.

Despite this lack of direct correlation between state admission policies and freshman performance, a few states have documented positive change in student achievement. Since 1990, for example, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education has conducted two admission-policy impact studies that show improvement in the preparation of entering students in the public college and university system: ACT scores are going up, student retention is improving (fewer students are dropping out) and college grades are improving. Similarly, recent data from the Illinois High School Feedback System show that freshmen who completed the required number of years in high school academic courses were more likely to satisfactorily complete their first course in English, mathematics and science and were more likely to earn As and Bs than students who did not complete the required courses in high school. Additionally, the average ACT composite score for students in each racial/ethnic group who completed the core college preparatory curriculum exceeded the average score of those who did not.

Section II

The Need to Strengthen the Quality of the High School Curriculum

Another important reason for establishing admission criteria is to enhance the quality of the high school academic curricula. Unfortunately, in the profiled states, quality was not a primary objective of the new admission policies. In some states, the quality of the high school curriculum and teaching was generally assumed to be acceptable. If students took the prescribed academic courses in high school, it was taken for granted that they would acquire the skills and competencies needed to meet the rigor of undergraduate coursework in college. Today these assumptions are being questioned.

Some states now recognize that admission policies are more effective if developed with joint support from schools, colleges and universities. Working together, faculty from the two sectors can discuss and clarify vague or ambiguous policies. For example, when Illinois students continued to enter colleges with weak basic skills even after the state's admission policy was in place, the Illinois Board of Higher Education staff recognized that K-12 input was necessary.

According to Ann Bragg, associate director, academic affairs, Illinois Board of Higher Education, "the development and implementation of the Illinois admission policy was a board

effort: there was no representation from either higher education nor secondary education. This lack of participation from other sectors has caused some problems and confusion. For example, the board thought the course requirements with the parenthetical statements about what specific subjects were included in each were clear. They turned out not to be as clear as expected."

Anecdotal evidence and data in the study states show that more statewide effort is needed to help some high schools (especially those in low socio-economic areas) strengthen their academic curricula to ensure that graduating students have the knowledge and skills expected by colleges and universities. "We amended the admission policy and increased the requirements in mathematics and science hoping that high schools would strengthen their course offerings to mirror these changes," reflected Nancy Kaufman, former senior academic planner for the University of Wisconsin System. "Unfortunately, what we have heard is that some high schools are not doing much to substantively change their curriculum, but are merely changing the names of courses." Similar concerns are being raised in other states.

State higher education board staff in California, Illinois, Kentucky, New York and Oklahoma have data to show that while a larger percentage of high school graduates take the required college preparatory curriculum, some still need remediation. Their recommendation: evaluate high school course content to determine whether the prescribed pre-college courses provide the skills and competencies needed to successfully perform college-level work.

"In Kentucky, we have found many students who are being required to take remedial mathematics in college also reported taking algebra II in high school," says Michael Gardone, deputy executive director for academic affairs, Kentucky Council on Higher Education.

Jeanne Ludwig, senior policy analyst for the California Postsecondary Education Commission shared similar concerns in that state. "Despite data that show students taking more college preparatory curriculum, faculty of the four-year institutions in California as well as local business leaders have raised concerns about students' actual level of competence. Many have cited the level of remediation still being required and provided by the University of California and the California State University Systems for entering freshmen."

The cause of this remediation is not completely clear. What may help states understand rising postsecondary remediation are studies that examine the resources currently available to the schools, the quality of the teaching staff and ways for schools and colleges to work together to develop curriculum.

All state agencies in the profiled states stressed the importance of communicating clear expectations to schools and students and identified the need for collaboration to strengthen school curriculum. A recent report by the Illinois Board of Higher Education suggested the need for further efforts to communicate expectations to prospective college students and to work with teachers, counselors, parents and community groups to improve student preparation. Additionally, the board recognized that boards of education and higher education need to continue working with colleges and universities to clarify differences between the learning outcomes necessary for high school graduation and the level of knowledge and skills expected of students for college admission. Toward this goal, the report recommended that

"[f]aculty committees (school and college/university) . . . re-examine the issue of how to better align the number of units (or years) of a subject students are expected to complete in high school and the content knowledge and skills expected."[9]

Section III

The Need to Reduce Remediation in Postsecondary Education

Another key reason given by state higher education boards for increasing requirements for high school academic courses and grade point average/class rank is the need to reduce remediation in postsecondary education. Many public officials criticize the amount of postsecondary remediation that takes place, arguing that the programs fall outside of the roles and missions of colleges and universities. These courses, they say, duplicate what schools are required to teach and mean additional coursework and support services that are costly to the state, institutions and students.

Colleges and universities provide remedial services at the postsecondary level to eliminate identified academic deficiencies and to ensure that students have the skills needed to succeed in college-level courses. National- and state-level evidence indicate a growing need for these services. According to a 1990 U.S. Department of Education study of national college-level remediation, approximately 30% of entering college freshmen enroll in a remedial reading, writing or mathematics course. Over 70% of postsecondary education institutions offer remedial programs.[10] A Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) study provided even more compelling data. It showed that over 35% of entering freshmen enrolled in postsecondary remediation programs offered at over 90% of the public colleges and universities in the southern region.[11]

Some state-level studies show that students who need remedial courses tend to have taken fewer academic courses in high school. For example, prior to the adoption of the admission policy in Oregon, a study conducted by the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) showed a high level of needed remediation among first-year freshmen. The study concluded that high school students were not taking sufficient mathematics courses or were taking classes of low rigor.

In 1983, the Oregon Board of Higher Education adopted a state admission policy requiring a 14-unit high school curricula including three units of mathematics and two units of science. The policy further identified the specific courses that the board determined would best prepare students for college-level work: Algebra I and two additional years of college preparatory mathematics selected from geometry (deductive or descriptive), advanced topics in algebra, trigonometry, analytical geometry, finite mathematics, advanced applications, calculus, probability and statistics, or courses that integrate topics from two or more of these areas. One unit is highly recommended in the senior year. Algebra and geometry taken prior to ninth grade will be accepted. Despite these requirements, OSSHE continues to document the need for remediation in mathematics, possibly because high school mathematics courses are not well articulated with freshman coursework. Additionally, OSSHE data reveal that many

students are either not taking the recommended courses or are not following the recommended sequence.

The Oregon experience stresses the need for increased communication regarding necessary academic skills and expectations. In a recent national study, colleges and universities reported that an effective strategy for reducing the need for remedial education is communication with high schools about the skills students need for college-level work.[12] One traditional strategy for this communication is publishing and disseminating admission criteria to high schools. But a new initiative in New York offers a more systemic approach. It includes courses developed jointly by faculty in colleges and schools that target high school students and are aimed at ensuring student collegiate success.

In 1992, the State University of New York (SUNY) published a report called *College Expectations: The Report of the SUNY Task Force on College Entry-Level Knowledge and Skills,* which sets out what students on any SUNY campus should know and be able to do in order to complete the freshman year successfully. The report recommends that all students pursue an academically challenging senior year to ensure a smooth transition between high school and college.[13] To help them do that, the task force also recommends the development and implementation of a high school college preparatory course for juniors and seniors, developed by both high school and college faculty.

The objectives of the College Transition Course are to (1) teach time-management skills; (2) discuss goal-setting, brainstorming, teamwork, independent and collaborative group learning and other dimensions of problem-solving strategies; (3) enlighten students about college academic and personal support services and learning resources; (4) promote effective study and learning techniques; (5) orient students to the differences between the high school and college environments; (6) introduce students to academic expectations in the various college majors; and (7) serve as the capstone assessment course in which students and teachers analyze and evaluate Regents portfolios.

A selection from these portfolios, in combination with other assessment instruments, results in the production of an assessment file which students can carry to college. The course encourages partnerships between schools and local colleges. Beginning in 1994, and over the next two years, the course is being piloted in 15 high schools across the state. By 1996, it will be available to all in-state schools interested in implementing it.[14]

Section IV

The Need to Improve the Levels of Access and Academic Achievement of Underrepresented Students

Another major concern voiced in the study states has been whether and to what extent rigorous admission requirements for college will affect students who historically have been underrepresented in degree programs in postsecondary education. In particular, the issue centers on whether these requirements will help or hinder minority attendance.

Many profiled states claim that postsecondary education access for minority students has not been adversely affected by increased admission requirements. Education leaders reason that the states' community colleges are open enrollment and most public college and university systems offer alternative admission processes for a percentage of students who cannot meet the regular admission requirements. But this still leaves unresolved a fundamental educational equity issue because open *access* does not ensure collegiate *success*. This was a conclusion of a 1990 report by the City University of New York (CUNY) System.[15] The authors found that open admissions substantially increased access for underrepresented students without a corresponding increase in student outcomes. The report concluded that weak high school preparation, starting at a community college and full-time work while in college increased time to graduation and reduced minority students' baccalaureate degree attainment. If a state goal is to ensure that more minorities are admitted, persist and graduate from baccalaureate degree programs, then policy strategies need to address minority student preparation, including initiatives aimed at helping more minority students meet the general admission standards.

A 1992 evaluation of the Statewide Admission Standards Policy completed by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education found that minority students admitted to college through an alternative admission process are less likely to graduate than others who meet the general admission requirements. Colorado's admission policy allows each institution to admit students on alternative criteria, up to a number not to exceed 20% of the admitted pool of students. This exception to the admission policy is called the "window." One issue examined in the evaluation was the policy's impact on minority access to Colorado's public four-year colleges and universities. The study found that overall minority access increased between 1987 and 1991, corresponding to an increase in the percentage of minority high school graduates in Colorado over the same period. Part of the increase in minority participation, however, resulted from minority admission through the "window." The evaluation also showed that, in general, "window" students had lower performance measures (first fall grade point averages, retention rates, graduation rates after five years) than those who achieved the entry standards.[16] Alternative admission practices serve important goals: to provide access to students who might not meet all requirements for college admission but who may still succeed in college and to enhance the diversity of the overall student population. Academic and other student support services will need to be provided to enhance opportunities for successful undergraduate education experiences for students under alternative admission policies.

National research results released in 1990 by The College Board suggest that minority students who want a college degree and enroll in the right high school courses can overcome the barriers to college entry. Specifically, when minority high school students take a prescribed sequence of college preparatory courses (which especially includes geometry), their college attendance rates closely match those of white students.[17]

A key policy issue for education leaders, then, is ensuring that underrepresented minority and disadvantaged students have access to or take the required high school college preparatory curricula. Current national data indicate that this may not be happening. The U.S. Department of Education reports that of high school graduates taking the core (college preparatory) curriculum in high school (four years of English, three years of social studies,

three years of science, three years of mathematics, two years of foreign language and one-half year of computer science), 24 percent were white as opposed to over 29% percent Asian American, less than 21% African American and approximately 20% Latino American.[18] It would appear that the message to take rigorous academic courses may not be reaching enough minority students. Although more minorities are enrolled in academic courses today than in the past, their participation in college preparatory programs is still unacceptably low.

"In Kentucky, minority students are not taking the Pre-College Curriculum (PCC) in the same proportion as other groups and also are scoring low on the ACT as a group," says Gardone. "We recognize that if this pattern continues, and if PCC requirements are increased, minority access to higher education will be adversely affected. We need to find effective strategies for encouraging and motivating minority students to enroll in these courses."

Increasing the achievement levels of minorities in postsecondary degree programs is often articulated through internal planning reports, but it may require a more assertive communications strategy that sends the message directly to districts, schools, students and their families. In some states, high school feedback reports have been used as a tool to communicate with high schools about the performance of recent graduates. A 1994 feedback report published by the Florida Department of Education reveals that, based on the performance of first-time freshmen on entry-level placement tests in 1992 to 1993, underrepresented minorities were less ready to perform college-level work than white and Asian American students. Thirty-six percent of African American students, 44% of Latino Americans and 48% of American Indian students were prepared for college-level work in the areas of mathematics, reading and writing compared to 68% of white students and 65% of Asian American students.[19]

But merely listing required courses in a catalogue and placing it in high school counselors' offices is not enough. Schools need to provide students access to these courses. In schools where the required academic programs are in place, strategies need to be implemented – both by schools and colleges – for counseling and motivating students to take these courses and then providing support services to help them succeed. Before policies are implemented, colleges and universities need to recognize that schools with limited capacity and resources to offer the required curriculum may need additional time and financial support to comply.

"When the California State University System established their 15-unit subject area requirements, many schools complained that they would not be able to house or staff a full set of courses required for a larger proportion of their students to participate in the public universities," said Ludwig. In response, the system slowed down the phase-in of its course requirements and closely monitored the preparation of its entering classes across racial/ethnic groups. "This was done to ensure that any one or a combination of the requirements did not disproportionately disadvantage any particular student group or community," she explains. "Because of the slow down, some high schools had time to gear up for the requirements (either alone or in cooperation with the community colleges in their areas) to ensure that all of their students who were interested in participating had the opportunity to take a full college-preparatory curriculum."

Section V

The Need to Manage Enrollment Within Constrained Budgets

Study states also are concerned about how to provide access to and cover the costs of a college degree for all qualified and interested students. In most states demand and capacity are balanced: the number of students submitting applications generally equals the number of seats available within and among the various public postsecondary institutions. But increasing numbers of states are experiencing growing demand for access. At the same time, public funding to support postsecondary education programs has decreased, and little hope exists that new state tax dollars will accommodate the growth. Selective admission policies provide an enrollment management strategy allowing institutions to control the number of entrants and sort students based on their interests and academic strengths.

The use of more selective admission policies as an enrollment management tool is being considered in states with growing populations and restricted access to state tax dollars (e.g., California, Florida and Texas). A recent report by the California Postsecondary Education Commission summarizes this dilemma in that state:

> Historically, both public higher education systems (University of California and California State University) have maintained a commitment to providing a placement for all eligible California graduates who chose to apply and enroll. However, a number of factors conspire today to prevent the segments from maintaining this commitment: (1) The recent economic depression in conjunction with legislation enacted over the past 15 years that have constrained the state's flexibility to tax and disburse revenues have also constrained state support of its public baccalaureate institutions, thereby inhibiting their ability to meet their current commitments. While some economic indicators suggest the economy may be beginning to recover, recent voter behavior leaves little hope that they are willing to increase their tax burden to support growth in higher education. (2) The state is poised on the verge of a surge in its college-age population. By 1999, the children of the baby-boom generation plus those of new immigrants to the state will comprise the largest high school class to ever graduate from California schools (380,000 graduates). Existing and planned reductions to the schools' dropout rate are also likely to contribute to growth in the numbers of high school graduates. These graduates have diverse race/ethnic and language backgrounds. (3) A larger percentage of an increasing high school graduate population will be sufficiently academically prepared to make them eligible for university enrollment. (4) With the instigation of the comprehensive pattern of 15 courses now required for admission to the State University, the definition of the high school academic preparation deemed necessary for public university admission in California became uniform. Through a combination of student effort and school pressures, an increasing proportion of the State's graduates have enrolled in a full college preparatory program and completed it at the achievement level sufficient to be eligible for the State University and the University. This phenomenon has already pushed the University of California's historical eligibility rate above its Master Plan guideline. Preliminary 1991 data indicate the trend to continue. Thus, the eligibility pool for the California

> State University may also be exceeded. Just as the proportions of eligible graduates from racial and ethnic groups historically underrepresented in postsecondary education begin to increase significantly, the State's public universities may need to raise those requirements in order to stay in compliance with the Master Plan guidelines, thus seriously threatening the States ability to meet its equity goals.[20]

A similar fiscal and demographic environment in Florida motivated the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission to recommend recently to the state's public community colleges that they consider establishing admission standards for students pursuing an associate of arts degree:

> Florida's 28 community colleges have traditionally served as open door institutions in that they do not limit admission of high school graduates. However, as the State continues to grapple with the effects of diminishing state resources for education, the debate over postsecondary access should not exclude an examination of the need for standards for admission to an associate of arts degree program. While high school exit standards in the public K-12 system remain the focus of Blueprint 2000 reform initiatives, remediation will remain an integral part of the mission of the state's community colleges in the foreseeable future. While the open door policy for public community colleges should be retained for Florida residents as a primary point of entry to postsecondary education, the Commission remains concerned that students who enter a college without the prerequisites needed for an associate of arts program often require a considerable number of additional courses prior to progressing in an A.A. degree track.[21]

State legislatures are debating whether state funding or academic preparation should drive access to college. Current and projected enrollments in higher education could very well influence college admission policies. If more students become eligible to enter college while fiscal support for higher education continues to decline, colleges may need to increase admission requirements, thus limiting access to some colleges and programs.

"Our current [fiscal] climate may require the state to rethink institutional missions which may include limiting the delivery of collegiate services to a more narrowly defined population of students," comments Ludwig. This has implications for community colleges which enroll an ever increasing number of first-year students. In turn it may have implications on the number of students who wish to transfer into universities. "But, there is continued hope," she says, "that admission policy will be grounded in sound academic preparation, rather than shifting whenever the state's fiscal climate changes."

Section VI

The Need to Align High School Student Outcomes and College Expectations

A 1994 SHEEO survey of 50 state higher education coordinating and governing boards indicates that over half of these agencies are working with K-12 education to define what students should know and be able to do if they are to succeed in college. In many states, the efforts to articulate educational standards and define competency levels also includes making changes to college admission policies.[22]

The work to define competencies for high school graduation and college admission is taking place in some capacity in all ten profiled states. However, systemic efforts to develop competency- or performance-based admission policies are under way in only three: Oregon, Florida and Wisconsin. While each is designing their policies differently, the rationale for change follows a similar pattern. Driven by state attempts to reform the structure and outcomes of K-12 education, new admission procedures are aimed at aligning high school student outcomes and college expectations.

Oregon's 1991 school reform legislation, for example, requires all Oregon secondary schools to begin offering Certificates of Initial Mastery (CIM) in 1996 and Certificates of Advanced Mastery (CAM) in 1997. These certificates will be performance-based. In other words, students progress as they demonstrate their mastery of defined skills and knowledge. The K-12 education system is being redesigned to allow students to move from level to level as they are intellectually and socially ready. To respond to these changes, the Oregon State System of Higher Education (OSSHE) is developing admission procedures compatible with the program of the public education system. The Proficiency-Based Admission Standards System (PASS) will allow students to move to higher education as they are ready and apply the results from many of the CIM and CAM assessments to college admission requirements. OSSHE offers two reasons for the shift to a performance-based policy: (1) the current admission system cannot identify effectively those students prepared to do college-level work and (2) there is little possibility that this admission system can be modified in a way that will result in substantial improvement in student skills and knowledge.

As PASS Director David Conley explains, "Rather than attempting to raise the required grade point average, which is likely only to promote grade inflation, or to require more classes in particular subject areas, which has been done during the past decade with minimal impact, OSSHE is designing an admission system that is consistent with school reform in Oregon, one that is likely to identify more students who are properly prepared and capable of doing college-level work." It will be compatible with the precepts of school reform because it moves the focus of instruction away from the learning processes (classes of a particular length and title) to the results of those processes.

Oregon's proficiency-based system challenges assumptions embedded in traditional admission policies. In one section of the PASS report, in which the limitations of the current admission system are cited, OSSHE make the following points:

> Data from the [state's] Office of Institutional Research Services suggest that the existing system, based on Carnegie units, course title, grade point average, and class standing (combined with SAT and other measures), does not result in the uniform selection of students who perform at minimally acceptable levels in key performances areas such as math and writing. Current methods of admission tend to emphasize the processes of education, not the products. In many cases, it is unclear what is actually being measured. In other cases, current procedures may be encouraging the teaching of skills and knowledge that may be less valuable in the future. These current measures (GPA, class standing, Carnegie units, titles of courses taken) can actually tend to discourage proper student preparation in some cases. For example, students might take less challenging courses in order to keep their grade point averages high, or parents might pressure their teacher to award their child a higher grade, regardless of the child's actual performance or knowledge level. There is pressure for grade inflation in such a system. Teachers face difficult choices because their accurate reporting of a student's knowledge or skill level may interfere with the student's ability to get into college. Standards vary dramatically from teacher to teacher, class to class, and school to school. By requiring some courses for college admission, higher education has unwittingly insulated whole areas of the high school curriculum and instructional program from serious examination and improvement. Those who teach in these courses may believe they should not change what they do because they are doing what colleges and universities want.[23]

Proponents of performance-based admission argue that the policies will not only support school reform but also will promote quality in undergraduate degree programs. Florida's statewide effort to implement school reform – *Blueprint 2000* – provides a good example. Policy reform in that state is designed to meet a set of specific goals:

> (1) Heightened attention to educational outcomes; (2) Higher education faculty want students who are fully prepared for college level work. Rigorously developed and uniformly defined performance standards will be attractive to faculty because grades in individual courses are not standard across high schools or even within schools; (3) Performance standards that are uniform and consistently applied throughout the state may make dual enrollment credits more palatable to faculty and academic departments; (4) University and community college faculties, in consultation with their secondary school colleagues must have the primary role in determining freshman competencies. These competencies may be higher than competencies needed for a high school diploma; (5) The application of performance standards ought to reduce the complexity of curricula in postsecondary education programs, and free faculty for teaching at advanced levels by reducing high demand for some required introductory courses. The net result will be reduced time to complete a degree. (6) The use of performance standards would enable many students to bypass redundant courses, thus freeing time for advanced level work.[24]

Because it is still not known to what extent schools are changing their curriculum or structures (e.g., eliminating grades, integrating academic coursework, etc.), some states are developing strategies that accommodate the admission of students from schools that use performance-based exit standards as well as those that use traditional admission criteria. This

is the case in Wisconsin. The University of Wisconsin System offers the following rationale for developing a dual system:

> Implementation of a competency-based admission policy should complement the pace of K-12 school curriculum restructuring. The amount of K-12 restructuring is unknown. A few schools are implementing extensive restructuring plans, and all schools are being encouraged to restructure through training in site-based management and other state-wide efforts sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and others. In order to accommodate the restructuring efforts that are currently taking place, while not disturbing the traditional admission route, a competency-based admission policy should be implemented gradually. It should supplement (not supplant) the current admission policy. And it should be developed in a way that will allow for expansion as it is necessary.[25]

The University of Wisconsin System will pilot the competency-based admission policy in eight Wisconsin high schools and in all of the University of Wisconsin institutions during the 1995-96 school year. An evaluation component within the pilot project will provide important information about the efficiency and cost of using competency based admission and how students admitted under this approach perform in college. The results of the pilot study will be used to improve the admission process and help determine the feasibility of implementing this approach on a wider scale across the state.

Conclusion

College admission policies provide a substantive, transitional link between K-12 education and postsecondary education. In recent years many states have become more directly involved with college admission policies in reaction to public concern about the educational achievement levels of K-12 students. Over the past 10 years the primary rationale for developing state policies has been improving student preparation for college-level work. These policies have proved most effective when developed and implemented in collaboration with K-12 faculty. As states and institutions review and consider making changes to admission criteria, faculty from public colleges, universities and K-12 schools will need to be directly involved in policy development. Some of the issues that should be evaluated include the following:

- What components of the high school curricula best prepare students for college?
- What is the capacity of the schools in the state to offer students the curricula required by the admission policies?
- To what extent are college and university faculty working with faculty in schools to communicate expectations for college-level work and support restructuring and enhancement of the high school academic curricula?
- To what extent are rigorous academic courses offered in urban and rural schools, especially those that enroll a large percentage of underrepresented and minority students?

- What is the impact of college admission policies on access for underrepresented minority students? What is the impact on graduation?

- What collaborative strategies are being developed between schools, colleges and universities to increase minority participation in rigorous academic programs in the schools?

- To what extent are selective admission policies used as an enrollment management tool among colleges and universities? What is the impact of this strategy on access to baccalaureate degree programs?

- To what extent are performance-based admission policies supporting student transition from K-12 to college? Are these new policies improving the preparation of students for college-level work?

- How can collaborative data systems be used to strengthen high school programs?

College admission policies have always played a pivotal role in influencing changes in student learning productivity in both K-12 and postsecondary education. What is new is that states are playing a more direct role in the development of these policies and the recognition that K-12 and postsecondary education need to work together to ensure their success. These collaborative efforts will result in aiding student transitions and improving student achievement.

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Appendix A
Current Minimum Admission Requirements

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
CA	The Master Plan for Higher Education in California establishes that the University of California System select its first-time freshmen from the top 12 percent of the public high school graduates and that the California State University System select its first-time freshmen from the top 33 percent of the high school graduating class. The California community colleges provide enrollment opportunities for these and all other students interested in and able to benefit from continuing their education. The two public higher education systems establish their own specific admissions requirements. High school graduates may achieve eligibility for admission to the University of California and the California State University through a variety of means including selected combinations of grades and test scores or college entrance examination scores alone. Admissions for specific campuses may differ. The following are the freshmen eligibility criteria for California residents at the University of California and California State University: University of California (a) High school diploma (b) Subject area requirements (year course): 15 courses are required for admissions: 2 units U.S. History (1 year of world history, cultures, and geography); 4 units of English; 3 units of mathematics; 2 unit of laboratory science; 2 units of foreign language; 2 units of advanced courses/electives (general science will not be accepted) (c) Minimum grade point average of 2.82 in all 15 courses (d) Examination requirement: SAT/ACT and 3 College Board Achievement Tests, including English Composition, Math Level 1 or 2; and one of the following: English Literature, Science, Foreign Language, or Social Studies. (e) Scholarship/Examination Requirement: If a student has a GPA of 3.3 or higher in the required high school courses, this requirement is met. If the student's GPA is between 2.78 and 3.29, he/she must meet the University's Eligibility Index (a combination of GPA and entrance exam scores). (f) Entrance by examination only: SAT total of 1300 or ACT composite of 31 and Achievement test total of 1650 (minimum of 500 on each) California State University (a) High school diploma (b) Subject area requirements (year course): 15 courses were required for admissions: 1 unit of history; 4 units of English; 3 units of mathematics; 1 unit of laboratory science; 2 units of foreign language; 1 unit of visual or performing arts; 3 units of advanced courses/electives (c) Minimum grade point average of 2.0 in all courses (d) Examination Requirement: No SAT/ACT required if GPA is 3.0 or better (e) Scholarship/Examination Requirement: GPA between 2.0 and 2.99 with qualifying test scores on State University's Eligibility Index (f) Entrance by examination only: None	1960 1990 REV.	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
CO	The Colorado Commission on Higher Education was directed by the Colorado General Assembly to develop admission standards for the public higher education institutions in Colorado. The policy was adopted in 1986 with a five-year implementation time-frame beginning in fall 1987. It establishes state-level admission standards for first-time freshmen and transfer students in each of the Colorado public four-year colleges and universities. The Commission's policy provides for differentiated admission and program standards that are consistent with institutional role and missions. The twelve public four-year institutions are distributed among four tiers: highly selective, selective, moderately selective and modified open. To evaluate the achievement records of first-time freshmen, the Commission uses a single scale incorporating measures of standardized test scores and high school performance. The Commission's Admissions Index is computed by adding the High School Performance Index (score derived from high school grade point average or class rank) and the Standardized Test Index (score derived from ACT or SAT standardized test scores). First-time freshmen applicants, who meet the Commission admissions index, are not guaranteed admission to the institution. Individual institutions may make admission decisions based on other criteria, as well (e.g., high school curriculum, special talents, and experiences). Institutions are encouraged to select the more qualified applicants from those who meet the Commission standards. Each institution may admit students who do not meet these standards, but who meet other criteria, up to a number not to exceed 20 percent of the admitted pool of students. Institutions are required to report all undergraduate, freshman applicants to the Commission on the Undergraduate Applicant File of the Student-Unit Record Data System (SURDS). Data will be used to monitor the compliance of institutions with the Commission's standards and to evaluate the policy's impact on institutions and students.	1986 1991	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
FL	The Board of Regents establishes *minimum* standards for eligibility for admission as a beginning freshman student to a state university. However, the Rules of the Florida Department of Education and the Board of Regents provide that the universities shall establish the criteria for the admission of students. The universities have the authority to adopt and promulgate rules which have the effect of increasing the minimum standard for eligibility for admission or to provide additional criteria in making admission decisions. The following are the minimum standards for beginning freshman admission to Florida state universities: (1) A diploma from a Florida public or regionally accredited high school or an accredited out-of-state high school. (2) SAT or ACT test scores (uses a sliding index). (3) Academic qualifications demonstrated in one of the following three alternative ways: (a) A satisfactory high school record, including at least a "B" average (3.0 on a 4.0 scale) in the required high school academic units. In computing high school grade point average for purposes of admission to a state university, additional weights will be assigned to grades in Honors and Advanced Placement courses. The high school academic unit requirements are as follows: 4 units of English (three of which must include substantial writing); 4 units of Mathematics (Algebra II and above); 3 units of Natural Science (two of which must include laboratory requirements); 3 units of Social Science (includes: history, civics, political science, economics, sociology, psychology and geography); 2 units of Foreign Language (Both credits must be in the same language. For purposes of this admission requirement American sign language will be accepted in place of a foreign language.) (b) A student applying for admission who has less than a "B" average in the required academic units, must present a combination of high school GPA and admission test scores. Academic eligibility for admission will be determined by a sliding Admissions Scale. (c) A student applying for admission who does not meet either of the previous two alternative requirements may bring to the university other important attributes or special talents and may be admitted if, in the judgment of an appropriate faculty committee, it is determined from appropriate evidence that the student can be expected to do successful academic work as defined by the institution to which the student applies. The university will provide an individual learning plan for each student enrolled who does not meet the normal admission requirements (listed in a and b above). For Board review, the university must also submit annual follow-up reports of the success of those students admitted under this alternative. Additionally, students must submit other appropriate evidence that he/she can be expected to carry out successful academic progress in the university.	1987	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
IL	The Board of Higher Education has the statutory power to set requirements for high school courses for first-time freshman admissions to baccalaureate programs in public universities and baccalaureate-transfer (Associate in Arts and Associate in Science) programs in public community colleges. No new student shall be admitted to instruction in any of the departments or colleges of [the university] unless such student also has satisfactorily completed: (a) at least 15 units of high school course work from the following 5 categories: 4 years of English (emphasizing written and oral communications and literature); 3 years of social studies (emphasizing history and government); 3 years of mathematics (introductory through advanced algebra, geometry, trigonometry, or fundamentals of computer programming); 3 years of science (laboratory sciences); and 2 years of electives in foreign language, music, vocational education, or art; (b) except that institutions may admit individual applicants if the institution determines through assessment or through evaluation based on learning outcomes of coursework taken, including vocational educational courses, that the applicant demonstrates knowledge and skills substantially equivalent to the knowledge and skills expected to be acquired in the high school courses required for admission. Institutions may also admit 1) applicants who do not have an opportunity to complete the minimum college-preparatory curriculum in high school and 2) educationally disadvantaged applicants who are admitted to the formal organized special assistance programs that are tailored to the needs of such students, providing that in either case, the institution incorporates in the applicant's baccalaureate curriculum courses or other academic activities that compensate for course deficiencies; and (c) except that up to 3 of the 15 units of coursework required by paragraph (a) of this subsection may be distributed by deducting no more than one unit each from the categories of social studies, mathematics, sciences, and electives and completing those 3 units in any of the 5 categories of coursework described in paragraph (a). Institutions setting their own admission policies have a choice of including the exceptions (b) and/or (c).	1985 MOD 89 1993	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
KY	Admissions requirements are established by the institutions in keeping with adopted policies of the Council on Higher Education. Under Kentucky law, the Council on Higher Education establishes minimum qualifications for admission to public institutions of higher education. Each institution may establish additional requirements for institutional and/or program admission in accordance with its mission. The following are the minimum qualifications for institutional admission as first-time freshmen: (1) Graduation from high school or a high school equivalency certificate (GED) (2) Completion of the ACT. Each institution may accept the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) in lieu of the ACT for resident and nonresident applicants in an amount not to exceed ten (10) percent of the first-time freshmen admitted to baccalaureate programs. Each university may establish additional admission criteria to supplement these minimum requirements. If, under extenuating circumstances, students are admitted conditionally without having fulfilled the testing requirement, the students must take the ACT to fulfill this requirement during the first semester of enrollment. (3) Completion of twenty (20) or more approved high school units including the following minimum academic preparation requirements are eligible for admission to baccalaureate programs at each university. (a) Four (4) units of high school study in English, specifically including English I, English II, English III, and English IV or AP English. (b) Three (3) units of high school study in mathematics, specifically including Algebra I or Algebra II, Geometry. This mathematics requirement also may be met by completing the integrated mathematics series consisting of three (3) units. (c) Two (2) units of high school study in science, specifically including Biology I and either Chemistry or Physics I, at least one (1) of which shall be a laboratory course. (d) Two (2) units of high school study in social studies, specifically including World Civilization and U.S. History or AP American History. (e) In addition, college-bound students are encouraged to take as part of their elective course selections, additional coursework in mathematics, sciences, foreign languages, arts, and computer literacy. Substitutions cannot be made for any course which is identified by a specific program of studies number unless the course in question has been deemed equivalent in content by the Council on Higher Education in consultation with the Department of Education. A waiver of a required precollege curriculum course may, however, be justified if: a) a given student's handicapping condition is verified through appropriate documentation; b) the school district superintendent (or designee) verifies that a student's handicapping condition will prevent the student from completing the course in question; and c) another course in a closely related area can be substituted for the course that cannot be completed. Specifically subject to this requirement are the following: first-time freshmen pursuing a baccalaureate degree with or without a declared major; students converting from non-degree status to baccalaureate-degree status; students changing from certificate or associate-degree level to baccalaureate-degree level; and students who, transferring from other institutions, have been admitted to baccalaureate-degree status by the receiving institution. All degree-seeking students shall be assigned a degree-level code when reporting enrollment data to the Council.	1991 1995	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
NY	The Boards of Trustees of the two public higher education systems in New York establish their own admission standards in compliance with regulations, applicable to all postsecondary institutions, established by the Board of Regents. Community colleges in both systems are open enrollment. They are open to any one in the county or service area who is able to benefit from the programs. CUNY: Since 1970, the City University of New York (CUNY) has had an open admissions policy. It will admit to one of its colleges all applicants who present a high school diploma or its equivalent. However, applicants will not always be admitted to the City University college of their first choice. Any student with a high school diploma or a GED can gain admission to a CUNY community college. Admission into one of the nine senior colleges is based on a minimum grade-point average of 80 (3.0) and class ranking in the top one-third of the graduating class. In 1992, the CUNY Board of Trustees adopted a model high school curriculum called the College Preparatory Initiative (CPI). The program is made up of 16 courses (three in math, two in laboratory sciences, two in foreign languages, four in English, four in social studies and one in the arts) that all CUNY students would be encouraged to have completed before entering college. Students who fail to meet the requirements must make them up before graduating from CUNY, either by passing tests or by taking courses that cover the missing material. The program began in 1993 with all courses to be phased in by 2001. SUNY: SUNY does not have a university-wide policy establishing minimum admissions standards. Admissions requirements are campus- and program-specific. The minimum course recommendation for admission to baccalaureate programs are also the high school graduation requirements for the state of New York (e.g., four years of English, four years of social studies, three years of mathematics, three years of science). Two-year technical colleges and four-year universities also consider the following criteria: completion of a college-preparatory curriculum and scores on the regents exams. The 30 community colleges have a policy of open admissions to anyone within their sponsorship area with a high school diploma or a GED.	CUNY: 1970 SUNY: NA	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
OK	Oklahoma law provides that Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall prescribe standards of education for institutions in the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, including standards for admission to State Educational Institutions. Students must meet the criteria for both the high school curricular requirements and the high school performance requirements (e.g., minimum ACT scores or GPA and class rank) to be eligible for admission to programs leading to Associate in Arts, Associate in Science and Baccalaureate degrees. High School Curricular Requirements: 4 units of English including grammar, composition and literature; 2 units of Lab Science including biology, chemistry, physics or any lab science certified by the school district. (General science with or without a lab may not be used to meet this requirement.); 3 units of Mathematics including Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Trigonometry, Math Analysis, Calculus; 2 units of History including 1 unit of American History. In addition to the 11 high school units required for admission, the following are recommended for college preparation: 4 additional units of the subjects listed above or selected from the following: computer science, foreign language, speech, economics, geography, government, psychology, sociology. Two units of one foreign language are strongly recommended. High School Performance Requirements: The policy provides for differentiated admission and program standards that are consistent with institutional role and missions, including (a) high school graduate; (b) completion of high school curricular requirements; (c) completion of the ACT or similar acceptable battery of tests; (d) ACT test score or class rank and minimum GPA.	1993 1997	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
OR	The Board of Higher Education requires that to be eligible for admission to Oregon public 4-year institutions entering freshmen must meet the following minimum requirements: (1) High school graduation. Non-graduates must have minimum scores on each of the five subtests of the GED. Individual institutions require specified average scores on the five subtests. Graduates of unaccredited or nonstandard high schools must have minimum scores on the SAT or ACT exams and specified average scores on the SAT Subject Tests. (2) A minimum GPA which ranges from 2.5 to 3.0 which varies by the institution. (3) Submission of SAT or ACT test scores. (OSSHE institutions use test scores for the following: (a) as an alternate means of meeting the GPA requirement; (b) to comply with the admission policy for graduates of nonstandard or unaccredited high schools; (c) in selectively admitting qualified applicants; (d) for advising and guidance purposes. (4) The 14-unit high school subject requirements (each unit equals one year): (a) 4 units of English including the study of English language, literature, speaking and listening, and writing with emphasis on and frequent practice in writing expository prose during all four years. (b) 3 units of Mathematics including Algebra I and two additional years of college preparatory mathematics selected from geometry (deductive or descriptive), advanced topics in algebra, trigonometry, analytical geometry, finite mathematics, advanced applications, calculus, probability and statistics, or courses that integrate topics from two or more of these areas. (One unit is highly recommended in the senior year. Algebra and geometry taken prior to the ninth grade will be accepted.) (c) 2 units of Science including a year each in two years of college preparatory science such as biology, chemistry, physics, or earth and physical science, one recommended as a laboratory science. (d) 3 units of social studies including one year of U.S. history, one year of global studies (world history, geography, etc.), and one year of social studies elective (government is strongly recommended). (e) 2 units of Other College Preparatory which may be a foreign language (highly recommended), computer science, fine and performing arts, or other college preparatory electives including advanced-level vocational-technical courses. (Units need not be in the same subject.) Effective academic year 1997-98, OSSHE will add a second language admission requirement for all new freshmen. The requirement includes either a two year high school sequence of foreign language (2 Carnegie units) or a proficiency equivalent. A more advanced proficiency-based requirement will be implemented for students who enter in 1999-2000. The proficiency levels have been established for Spanish, French, German and Japanese. In the future, proficiency-levels will be established for other second languages and American Sign Language. Oregon two-year institutions are open admission and require students to either have a high school diploma or have passed the GED test.	1983 1985	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

STATE	CURRENT MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	YR EST*/ EFFTVE	TO WHOM APPLICABLE
TX	There are no statewide requirements for admission to Texas universities. The Board of Regents of each institution is allowed to set is own admissions requirements. All universities require their students to have high school diplomas or high school equivalency certificates for admission. Most universities also require or recommend certain high school courses. Some Texas universities have minimum test score requirements for the SAT or ACT, while others simply require the submission of the results but have no minimum score requirement. Texas community colleges are open enrollment and accept any student with high school diploma or GED.	NA	
WI	The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents sets minimum statewide requirements. The minimum requirements include possessing a high school degree or GED, grade point average, class rank, ACT/SAT scores, and completing specified coursework. The following courses constitute the current 17-credit minimum high school curriculum requirements: 4 credits of English; 3 credits of Mathematics; 3 credits of Natural Science; 3 credits of Social Science; 4 credits of Other Elective Credits. Each University of Wisconsin institution establishes its own specific admissions requirements. While all UW System institutions must include the minimum requirements as part of their admissions criteria, they may exceed these requirements. In July 1992, a working group on admission requirements in science and mathematics recommended to the Board of Regents that they amend the current admissions policy by increasing both mathematics and science requirements and reducing elective credits by one resulting in a total of 17 credits. In the same report to the Board of Regents which recommended amending the freshman admission policy, the UW System Administration indicated that a task force would be appointed to examine the viability of developing a competency-based approach to admission for UW System institutions. A Competency-Based Admission Task Force was appointed in October 1992. The task force was made up of representatives from the Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Technical College System, UW faculty and administration and K-12 schools. In June 1993, the Board of Regents endorsed the Task Force recommendation that the UW System adopt a competency-based admission policy. The policy would direct the UW System, together with the institutions, to develop competency-based admission processes that will supplement (not replace) the current admission policy based on Carnegie unit.	1992 1995	1ST-TIME FRESHMEN

*Includes the most recent year changes made. In some states, the policy to establish minimum admission requirements was made in an earlier year.

Appendix B
Proposed Changes in Admission Policies

STATE	PROPOSED CHANGES IN ADMISSIONS POLICIES
CA	Changes to the admission policies in the state occur periodically. The changes are driven by conditions that include, but are not limited to, the CPEC Eligibility Studies. The changes in the admissions criteria are at the prerogative of the Academic Senate and each system and its governing board and periodically they make adjustments. For example, the 1994 adjustments made by the University of California System to add a year of history and another year of laboratory sciences were not related to the eligibility study. They were related the University's concerns about student preparation.
CO	Special interest groups have approached CCHE to explore the possibility of change. There have been a number of informal discussions around the state dealing with admissions standards. These groups suggest relating them more directly to the standards-based education movement taking place in Colorado. One group proposed that institutions incorporate mastery-levels to determine students' academic eligibility for admissions. Another group (Re-Learning), proposed creating an exemption category for students who graduate from schools using performance-based curriculum and assessment. A group of schools (which tend to be from small districts) are working with two state public institutions to develop a proposal to pilot an alternate admissions process. Some Commissioners believe that CCHE needs to be prepared to accommodate the changes taking place in the schools as opposed to being reactive to the changes. It has been suggested that performance standards could be an elaboration of competencies. Performance standards would specify the performance levels required of students who wish to enter specific courses or programs. In response to the suggestion, CCHE may first attempt to define performance standards in science. Pilot them in selected schools to determine if they are good indicators of whether students are prepared to enter college science courses. The indicators would show not only whether students are prepared, but what resources must be invested to get them to the point where they can perform successfully in college courses. To date, CCHE has defined competencies and provided examples of them. The Commission will attempt to connect these with the LINCS (Linkages in Networking Colleges and Schools) agenda. Some legislators are discussing moving this development of standards through legislation to legitimatize and institutionalize them. CCHE prefers to avoid additional legislation. The LINCS Task Force has currently outlined a time-line from 1986 to 1997 to develop goals and objectives of standards legislation.

STATE	PROPOSED CHANGES IN ADMISSIONS POLICIES
FL	The Florida Department of Education is developing a single entry-level placement test to review the definition of remediation and students with special needs. The Florida College Entry-Level Placement Testing Program will be used to provide a more effective, fair and uniform entry-level placement testing program for students entering the state's community colleges and state universities. The program will include a set of tests designed to assess student proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics to ensure proper placement of students in English and mathematics courses. It will also provide Florida's public high schools with information on how well their graduates are prepared for entrance into college, establishing a benchmark for school improvement and accountability. The goal of the placement testing program is to create a seamless assessment system that enhances both college placement and public school improvement goals. The assessment will be used by postsecondary institutions to be piloted in the spring of 1994, and implemented in Fall 1995. New policies on the transition of students from secondary to postsecondary education will be influenced by recent education reform legislation. In 1991, the Florida State Legislature passed *Blueprint 2000: A System of School Improvement and Accountability*. The intent of the legislation is to raise education standards and to decentralize the system so school districts and schools are free to design learning environments and experiences to better meet the needs of each child. *Blueprint 2000* contains seven state education goals. Goals Two and Three are aimed at student preparation and readiness for postsecondary education and employment. In 1993, the Postsecondary Accountability Articulation Committee (made up of the FCERA, the Board of Regents, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, the Education Standards Commission, and the Department of Education) agreed in a formal Statement of Cooperation to work together to facilitate the reform and restructuring of the K-12 education system of Florida. An Intersector Task Force was formed to operationalize the Statement of Cooperation.
IL	No plans to change policy. However, the State Board of Education and the Board of Higher Education staffs have established a task force representative of high schools and colleges/universities in the state to begin the discussion of potential solutions to two challenges to the assessment and monitoring of student school/college performance: (1) assessments must be valid and reliable; (2) transmission of assessment results and their evaluation must be financially practical. The task force will share information on what each institution is doing in assessment and how results are used in the admission decision; develop alternative ways of transmitting and evaluating assessment information; test the validity, reliability, and comparability of the alternatives; and recommend transmission guidelines, a common format, and an evaluation rubric for use statewide. These plans are currently on hold pending further statewide policy design discussions on the transition of students from school-to-college and school-to-work.
KY	No plans to change. However, the Council on Higher Education will ask a study group representative of the Council, public universities, high schools, students, and the Kentucky Department of Education to develop and recommend new minimum admission standards for entrance into baccalaureate programs at Kentucky's public universities. The group will review current admission policies (including the PCC requirements) and report to the Council regarding advisable revisions which are both educationally sound and responsive to the needs of the citizenry. The issues the study group will work on include: (1) What coursework or competencies comprise adequate preparation for college? (2) How should admission requirements be revised in response to new kinds of data and experiences that students will bring with them from restructured high schools? For example, in lieu of or in combination with grades, students may have portfolios, performance assessments, interdisciplinary coursework, community service credit, etc. (3) Under the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA), the public schools are using new assessments. These data will be collected and disseminated *via* the Kentucky Instructional Results Information System (KIRIS). How can colleges and universities appropriately utilize these new data and experiences?

STATE	PROPOSED CHANGES IN ADMISSIONS POLICIES
NY	CUNY: In 1992, the CUNY Board of Trustees adopted a model high school curriculum called the College Preparatory Initiative (CPI). The program is made up of 16 courses (three in math, two in laboratory sciences, two in foreign languages, four in English, four in social studies and one in the arts) that all CUNY students would be encouraged to have completed before entering college. Students who fail to meet the requirements must make them up before graduating from CUNY, either by passing tests or by taking courses that cover the missing material. The program began in 1993 with all courses to be phased in by 2001. SUNY: In its 1992 publication *SUNY 2000 College Expectations: The Report of the SUNY Task Force on College Entry-Level Knowledge and Skills*, the University outlined the level of knowledge and skills it would like its entering freshmen to have. While not admissions standards, the report specifies what SUNY expects its students to know and be able to do under seven broad categories: (a) academic and personal support skills; (b) information management skills, including computer and information literacy; (c) communication skills; (d) analytical skills; (e) humanities, arts and foreign languages; (f) natural sciences, mathematics and technical studies; and (g) social sciences and history.
OK	No additional changes to the admissions policy planned. The current policy complements other policies and Regents initiatives. For example, the Regents in cooperation with the State Department of Education, will create a testing, evaluation and advisement system that links higher education and high schools. The Oklahoma Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS), designed by ACT, provides information to students and the high schools they attend about their potential success in college and the workplace at the eighth and tenth grade levels. EPAS will be phased in between 1993 and 1995. This is part of the Regents' assessment policy (not the admission policy) which will provide information related to student placement.
OR	The State System's Admission policy is currently undergoing changes including adoption of: a second language admission requirement for all new undergraduate students, a transitional admission policy process that relates to Oregon educational reform, and most recently, the approval of movement toward proficiency-based admission standards. The policy for Second Language College Admissions was adopted by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 1993. The policy was enacted so that students will attain second language proficiency and international understanding. The OSSHE and the Department of Education are working together on the statewide policy framework. Second language instruction also will be required for the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) as part of the state's school reform initiative. The second language requirement will become effective for admission to Oregon public higher education institutions beginning the 1997-98 academic year. In January 1994, the Board of Higher Education adopted a policy to develop proficiency-based college admission standards. These standards will be congruent with anticipated changes in school curricula related to implementation of Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) programs. The system will require students to demonstrate that their knowledge and skills meet or exceed the standards that will be stipulated for admission. Under the current system, students do not have to provide evidence of what they know or can do, but only show that they have taken the required number of courses and meet or exceed the minimum grade point average. The new system ties admission directly to a student's demonstrated proficiency, not "seat time," credit hours, or other indirect measures of learning. In a proficiency-based system, clear performance standards are established and students are assessed in relation to these standards. Secondary schools design an instructional program that prepares students for these assessments. OSSHE staff have worked with campuses and other education sectors to refine proposed proficiency standards and establish performance levels. In May 1994, the Board of Higher Education approved the proficiency-based admission standards. In fall 1994, the process of developing assessments in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Education and high school pilot sites will begin. The PBAS will be fully implemented beginning academic year 1999-2000. Between now and 1999 (when the proficiency-based admission policy will be implemented), the State System admission policy will be in transition. Until school reform is widely implemented and proficiency-based processes are developed, traditional admission policies will be in effect.

STATE	PROPOSED CHANGES IN ADMISSIONS POLICIES
TX	To improve the quality of higher education and limit the amount of student remediation required at the college level, the Texas Coordinating Board in 1993 asked the Legislature to call for universities to adopt admission standards modeled after the State Board of Education's (SBOE) college-prep curriculum by the year 2000. The Legislature passed House Concurrent Resolution 68 which expresses the expectation that Texas public universities use the College Proficiency Specialization (SBOE college-prep curriculum) as a model for minimum admission standards for students entering those institutions by academic year 2005 and thereafter. HCR 68 also stressed that the Legislature expects all universities to continue to strive for meeting the goals of the Texas Educational Opportunity Plan for Higher Education. The SBOE college-prep curriculum requires six units of course work for additional proficiencies in mathematics, sciences, and foreign languages beyond the 18 units for developing core proficiencies. Although all public four-year high education institutions in the state have included the college-prep curriculum in their catalogs, only two have so far planned to adopt the curriculum as admission standards by 1996. This curriculum is recommended but not mandated.
WI	In July 1992, a working group on admission requirements in science and mathematics recommended to the Board of Regents that they amend the current admissions policy by increasing both mathematics and science requirements and reducing elective credits by one resulting in a total of 17 credits. In the same report to the Board of Regents which recommended amending the freshman admission policy, the UW System Administration indicated that a task force would be appointed to examine the viability of developing a competency-based approach to admission for UW System institutions. A Competency-Based Admission Task Force was appointed in October 1992. The task force was made up of representatives from the Department of Public Instruction, Wisconsin Technical College System, UW faculty and administration and K-12 schools. In June 1993, the Board of Regents endorsed the Task Force recommendation that the UW System adopt a competency-based admission policy. The policy would direct the UW System, together with the institutions, to develop competency-based admission processes that will supplement (not replace) the current admission policy based on Carnegie unit. A pilot program is currently being developed. All UW institutions will be required to evaluate the admission criteria submitted under this competency-based admissions effort. The pilot and subsequent policy will accommodate students who have graduated from high schools that have made changes to competency-based programs. All other high school students may select between the two admissions processes. Beginning in academic year 1995-96, competency-based admissions will be available to students in eight pilot high schools. The following year (1996-97), the UW System will be prepared to accept applications from any high school student submitting applications under the competency-based system.

Appendix C
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